

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/976,279
Response filed September 22, 2004
Reply to OA dated March 25, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended, and claim 5 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Support for the amendment to claim 1 may be found in original claim 5 (now canceled), which recited the photoacid proliferating agent (D) and that component (D) can be an organic acid ester.

Claims 1-4 and 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogiso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,999 A) in view of Makoto et al. (JP 09-138502A). (Office action paragraph no. 5)

The rejection is overcome by the amendments to the claims. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitation of original claim 5 that the composition comprises a photoacid proliferating agent (D) and that the photoacid proliferating agent is an organic acid ester. Applicant submits that neither Ogiso et al. nor Makoto et al. discloses or suggests this limitation. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogiso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,999 A) in view of Makoto et al. (JP 09-138502A) and further in view of Uno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,277,541). (Office action paragraph no. 6)

Claim 5 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. However, base claim 1 has been

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amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 5 of the proliferating agent (D) and that the proliferating agent is an organic ester. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner states that Uno teaches that cyclic acid anhydrides, phenols and organic acids are added to photosensitive compositions to increase sensitivity and improve development properties, citing column 26, lines 39-65.

However, claim 1, as amended, recites that photoacid proliferating agent (D) is an **organic acid ester** (a). Uno et al. does not disclose use of an **organic acid ester** as the “development accelerator.” An “organic acid ester” is clearly distinct from an “organic acid,” and no ester is listed in the exemplary organic acids in Uno et al., column 26, lines 55-65.

Applicant submits that none of the references (Ogiso et al., Makoto et al., nor Uno et al.) suggests or motivates the incorporation of an organic acid ester (as a photoacid proliferating agent (D)) into a negative photosensitive resin composition comprising a photocurable resin (A), a photoacid generator (B), and a photosensitizer (C).

Moreover, Applicant asserts that the use of an organic acid ester (as a photoacid proliferating agent (D)) in combination with a photoacid generator gives an unexpected effect, i.e., remarkably improved photosensitivity to the resin composition, as disclosed in the specification on page 16, line 12, to page 17, line 5 (page 16, line 21, to page 17, line 5, in particular). The resin composition and the dry film of the invention thereby have high sensitivity to visible light with a wavelength of 480 nm or more, allowing the formation of sharp patterns.

None of the cited references suggests the remarkable effects obtainable from the use of components (A), (B), (C) and (D), as recited in amended claim 1.

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Applicant therefore submits that pending claims 1-4 and 6-10 are novel and non-obvious over Ogiso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,999 A), Makoto et al. (JP 09-138502A) and Uno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,277,541), taken separately or in combination.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.


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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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